June 1, 2015

Montana Attorney General Tim Fox PO Box 201401 Helena, MT 59620

Dear Attorney General Fox:

I am writing this letter at the request of a mother that I have been working with since February 27, 2015. In my work, part of my job is facilitating Parenting With Purpose for parents who are required to take a parenting program through the Department of Family Services.

On February 25, 2015, I met with social worker, Jessica Arndt and her supervisor Daryia Mowery to discuss a case that they were referring to me. They discussed, for over an hour, the situation regarding a mother and how her children were removed due to psychological abuse. They shared with me that their involvement began when the mother contacted the hot-line at DPHHS to state that she had caught their son's father manipulating the son's penis to erection. The father told the mother that it wasn't a big deal because he just wanted to see how his son's erect penis compared to his. During this meeting with DPHHS, Jessica and Daryia shared with me that they were not at all concerned about the father manipulating his son's penis to erection because it was, "simply curiousity" by the father.

The following is testimony that I read in the court transcripts: The case worker said, "The father cannot be a sexual predator because child sexual abusers don't admit to their abuse and it was not an act of molesting the child". She also stated, "Dad didn't do it for his own sexual gratification" and "that a one-time thing is not going to do damage to the child."

Daryia and Jessica then went on to discuss the parent's 4 year old daughter's sexual abuse allegations. They shared that the daughter's counselor reported that the daughter had disclosed to her that her father was touching her inappropriately. There were also other reports to DPHHS regarding sexual abuse.

During our meeting the caseworkers shared with me that they had completed a "full investigation" and the sexual abuse simply did not happen. They went on to say that the children's grandmother was very controlling and she was "running the show." They also noted that the mother and grandmother have "psychological issues." They added that the mother's family is very "black and white and very religious." They identified the mother as being "histrionic and narcissistic", even though there is not a professional diagnosis of this. They stated that the mother and grandmother were very "resistant to see that there is no evidence of sexual abuse."

Additionally, the caseworkers shared with me that the mother does not show much affection or bonding with her children while attending supervised visits at DPHHS.

On February 27, 2015, I met with the mother for the first time. She was very open, but emotional about the removal of her children from her care. We discussed coping skills and I outlined the Parenting With Purpose program. She was very willing to begin the workbook and sessions. I met with her one time per week and discussed her progress on her workbook. She always had many questions and was very thorough in her work. She also discussed her problems with DPHHS in regards to how they were treating her and making it difficult for her to see her children.

On March 6, 2015, I attended a supervised visit with the mother and the children at DPHHS. She did not see me as I stood behind a window in which she could not see me. She was very interactive with her children, playing kitchen, grocery store and other pretend games. She was able to pay close attention to all children when engaged with another. She also successfully used distraction methods when the children became frustrated with something. She appeared very bonded with them and them to her. There was a lot of laughter and fun, imaginative play. I saw absolutely no evidence that the mother struggled with attachment and bonding.

On March 31, I met with the mother at her DPHHS meeting with Jessica. We discussed how well the mother was doing with her parenting program and what else was required for her to have unsupervised visits. After this meeting

Daryia, the DPHHS supervisor asked to talk to me with Jessica, the caseworker present. Daryia stated that I needed to read the mother's psychological report because it was obvious that I "was taken in by her" and "not able to identify the mother's psychological issues. Daryia continued to state, "I don't believe a thing that woman says, and you shouldn't either." Daryia also said that "this woman was in a completely good marriage with someone who wanted to build a life with her and she decided to leave, so now she has to just deal with that." When I said that Janine believes very strongly that her daughter has been sexually abused, Daryia stated, "Well she won't be able to get her kids back until she realizes that she is wrong."

On April 2. 2015, I was approved to supervise a visit with the mother and her children at Black Eagle Park to celebrate her daughter's birthday with all of her aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins. Again, the mother interacted very well with her children and they had great fun with their extended family. At the end of the visit, when Jessica came to take the children, the daughter cried and cried that she didn't want to leave her mother.

On April 11, I was again approved to supervise a visit with the mother and her children at their cousin's birthday party at the Children's Museum. They had a great time and it was obvious to me that the children are very bonded and attached to their extended family. The mother interacted in a very positive manner with her children. It should be noted that the day before, the children's father contacted me to tell me that I needed to stick by the mother and the daughter every minute of the visit because he was concerned that the mother may say inappropriate things to her daughter. I never observed this occurring during any visit that I had with the mother and her children. It is also relevant that when I went with the mother to pick up her children from their father, the children wore dirty, too small clothing and their hair was dirty and matted.

It should also be noted at this time that DPHHS had removed the mother from her current counselor, stating that this counselor was "enabling" the mother's views about the sexual abuse that was occurring with her children". DPHHS told her that she had to see a different counselor, but this counselor could not get the mother in for a month. This is interesting because DPHHS had stated that the mother had psychological issues, but would not find her a therapist who could see her sooner. Additionally, after the mother went to this counseling session, the therapist told her she could only see her one time per month. I did some research on some therapists who could see the mother immediately and regularly and gave these names to the DPHHS caseworker, but they denied this request and stated that the mother had to stay with the one she was assigned too.

On May 15, 2015, before the status hearing, Jessica Arndt informed me that I would be allowed to conduct the inhome parenting sessions with the mother and her children, and this would begin the following week. After court, she and Daryia informed me that Family Based Services would be used instead because that is who is listed on the mother's treatment plan.

On May 19, 2015, I met with the mother and her caseworker, Jessica to discuss when in-home services would begin because Judge McKittrick had ordered that they would begin this week. Although Jessica had informed me, as well as the mother that she had made the referral to Home Based Services 3 weeks prior, she stated on this date that she had not completed it yet, but would by May 22. I informed Jessica that the Judge had ordered in-home visits begin this week. Jessica said, "Well, that's not going to happen." I offered to do some supervised in-home visits free of charge and Jessica said no.

I also discussed the fact that the daughter was not yet in counseling even though the Guardian Ad Litem, as well as myself and the child's previous counselor had reported that this was of upmost importance due to the trauma of being removed from her mother's care. Jessica stated that the father had read the daughter's psychological report (I'm sure that she gave it to the father and this is illegal and unethical), and he did not believe his daughter needed therapy. I confronted the fact that even though he is the father, his beliefs should not supersede professional assessments. Jessica dismissed this.

On May 20. 2015, Daryia contacted me via phone and we had a long discussion. She asked if I offered to do inhome visits free of charge and if so, would I do that for all of their clients. I explained the fact that since they had not yet made a referral for in-home visits, I felt that it was very important for the mother to have these visits this week for the best interests of the children and because it was court ordered. I told her that I would do this for any client if the agency refused to pay for the visits because I felt strongly that children need to spend time with their parents. This conversation was very assertive on my part because I felt I needed to support the mother in this case.

Daryia scolded me for crossing a "professional line" with the mother and since she knew that I was going to testify against DPHHS, she did not want me at any more sessions that had to do with the mother at DPHHS. I told her that the mother needs a witness in her meetings with Jessica because Jessica lies to the mother and then says she didn't. Daryia said that she would be the witness, to which I answered, "Well, that won't work because you and Jessica are too biased in this case.

I would like to say that I worked as a Licensed Addiction Counselor and a Family/Parent Counselor for over 20 years. In those years, I have worked side by side with DPHHS with minimal issues. There has always been mutual respect on both sides. This situation is absolutely the worst of the worst. I have never seen DPHHS workers be this antagonistic towards a parent and I have never been treated with so much disrespect as a professional. I am appalled by the fact that they, as well as the Judge and District Attorney, do not identify an issue with the father manipulating his 2 year old son's penis to erection as sexual abuse. I am disappointed in the fact that DPHHS has allowed the father full access to his children and appear to be fully on his side despite allegations proved and unproved.

I am beyond discouraged that although DPHHS allowed me to conduct two lengthy supervised visits with the mother and her children, they suddenly would not approve me to supervise an in-home visit with the mother free of charge while waiting for approval for family based services. This proves to me that they **DO NOT** have the best interests of the children at heart.

I am disillusioned that an agency such as DPHHS does not have more oversight into the actions of their workers. I have heard that although people have taken this case to state supervisors, they are not doing anything and actually make light of the situation.

I am disenchanted with an agency that does not utilize the professional partnerships in the community to help them do their job. In fact they have disregarded any professional opinions and assessments that have occurred with this family that do not agree with them.

In closing, I would like to add that despite the struggles and the emotional toll that DPHHS has placed on this mother, she completed her parenting program with me and has been determined to do whatever it takes to complete her treatment plan. It should be noted that she would have completed her treatment plan if she would have been allowed to choose a therapist that was more readily available to her.

It appears to me that the DPHHS workers are blocking the mother from re-gaining custody of her children, while enabling the father to do whatever he wants. This is blatantly a case in which they have not considered the best interest of the children and are so against the mother and enmeshed with the father that they cannot see this case clearly. Furthermore, the more that professionals attempt to assess the situation, the more these caseworkers dig their heels in and refuse to see anything in a different way. I have never observed DPPHS workers treat their families with such disregard, disrespect and antagonism.

Thank you for reading this long affidavit and considering the implications of how DPHHS treats their clients and how this impacts the families and children that they are sworn to help and protect.

Please feel free to contact me at 406-781-1356 or via email at pattyjar55@gmail.com

Sincerely.

Patricia Jaraczeski LAC, BS